REMARKS

Initially, Applicants wish to respectfully thank the Examiner for accepting the drawings filed on November 7, 2003, and for acknowledging the Information Disclosure Statement filed on August 2, 2007, by returning the signed and initialed Forms PTO 1449 attached thereto. Applicants further wish to respectfully thank the Examiner for withdrawing the objection with respect to claim 6.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-11 will be pending, of which claims 1 and 7 will have been amended. Applicants' amended claim 1 recites "a network manager configured to generate the control command and to automatically search for a unique address associated with the master device or, when the search is unsuccessful, assign a specific address to the master device to install the master device to the network when the master device is newly connected to the network." These recited features of a network manager are shown, as a non-limiting example, at, e.g., Figure 4 and Figure 5 of the present specification. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 1 does not add new matter to the present application.

In view of the herein-contained amendment and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection together with an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course. Such action is respectfully requested and is believed to be appropriate and proper.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 - 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over HEITKAMP et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,970,961) in view of JEFFRIES (U.S. Patent No. 6,009,479). Applicants traverse the rejections of claims 1-11, and respectfully request

reconsideration and withdrawal of the same, for at least the following reasons.

Applicants' invention involves a network manager that sends a control command to a master device for controlling a plurality of slave devices, and automatically searches for a unique address of the master device, or, when the search is unsuccessful, assigns a specific address to the master device to install the master device to the network when the master device is newly connected to the network, as recited in, *e.g.*, independent claim 1, or notifying a plurality of home appliances connected to the network that the master device comprising the unique address or the assigned specific address has been appropriately connected to the network, as recited in, *e.g.*, independent claim 8, or the process of connecting a new home appliance to the network, including the other features, as recited in, *e.g.*, independent claim 10.

For example, referring to Figure 3 of the present application, according to a non-limiting aspect of the invention, a network system (and method for operating the same) is provided that connects a plurality of master devices and a plurality of slave devices. The invention allows for the automatic installation of a newly connected master device or a home appliance into an existing network system comprising a plurality of home appliances.

In contrast, HEITKAMP et al., is directed to a network system comprising redundant buses with redundant master controllers and slave controllers (*see*, *e.g.*, FIG. 2). HEITKAMP et al.'s network system is primarily concerned with addressing a need for reliable and redundant control signals (*see*, *e.g.*, column 1, lines 7-9; column 2, lines 16-24). Accordingly, HEITKAMP et al. discloses a plurality of buses (*e.g.*, BUS_A and BUS_B), each of which is under the control of a corresponding master controller (*e.g.*, MASTER_A controls BUS_A and MASTER_B controls

BUS_B), for communicating information amongst the slave devices and the master controllers connected to the buses. In this regard, each master controller controls operation of the corresponding bus (*e.g.*, MASTER_A controls operation of BUS_A) and creates time cycles, each time cycle including two time intervals: an address interval and a data interval. During the address interval, the controlling master controller provides a destination address on the multiplexed address and data line 310 (*see*, *e.g.*, FIG. 3), where the destination address identifies a slave device 220 to which a command signal or data signal is to be sent during the following data interval. Hence, HEITKAMP et al. functions, for the most part, similar to many existing network systems comprising a network that is connected to a plurality of master and slave devices. However, HEITKAMP et al. does not provide for an automatic installation of a newly connected master controller.

In fact, HEITKAMP et al. makes no provisions for adding new components to the network system defined by, *e.g.*, BUS_A and/or BUS_B, much less a master device. Referring to, for example, the Abstract and column 1, lines 28-35, 40-51, which were relied upon in the rejection of claim 1 to show the feature of a network manager (*see*, *e.g.*, pages 3 and 4 of the Official Action), HEITKAMP et al. merely summarizes the redundant processes of communicating information amongst the slave devices and the master controllers connected to the buses, where each master controller controls the operation of the corresponding bus (*e.g.*, MASTER_A controls operation of BUS_A) and creates time cycles, each time cycle including two time intervals: an address interval and a data interval. As noted above, during the address interval, the controlling master controller provides a destination address on the multiplexed address and data line 310 (*see*, *e.g.*, FIG. 3),

where the destination address identifies a slave device 220 to which a command signal or data signal is to be sent during the following data interval. However, HEITKAMP et al. does not disclose, *e.g.*, a network manager, or an equivalent thereof, that sends a control command to a master device, that automatically searches for a unique address associated with the master device, or, when the search is unsuccessful, assigns a specific address to the master device to install the master device to the network when the master device is newly connected to the network, as recited, *e.g.*, in independent claim 1.

JEFFRIES is directed to a system and method for automatically assigning unique addresses to agents on a system management bus in a computer system, wherein a plurality of master devices and a plurality of slave devices are connected on the system management bus, and wherein a master device performs a method for assigning a unique address to each of the slave devices automatically (*see, e.g.*, column 2, lines 26-56). In this regard, a unique address is automatically assigned to each slave device disregard weather a slave device already has a unique address (*see, e.g.*, column 2, lines 26-56). This is in contrast to the feature of a network manager that automatically searches for a unique address associated with the master device or, when the search is unsuccessful, assigns a specific address to the master device to the master device to install the master device to the network when the master device is newly connected to the network, as recited, *e.g.*, in Applicants' independent claim 1. Applicants further submit that JEFFRIES, does not disclose the feature of notifying a plurality of home appliances connected to the network that the master device comprising the unique address has been appropriately connected to the network, as recited in, *e.g.*, independent claim 8, or the process of connecting a new home appliance to the

network, as recited in, *e.g.*, independent claim 10, since, in JEFFRIES, communications between a master device and slave devices are solely for the purpose of assigning a unique address to each of the slave devices (*see, e.g.*, column 2, line 16 through column 4, line 36). In fact, JEFFRIES makes no provisions with respect to searching for a unique address associated with a master device or assigning a specific address to the master device or for installation of a newly connected master device. JEFFRIES also makes no provisions for determining whether a newly installed device is a master device or a slave device when a new device is added to the system management bus. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that JEFFRIES does not teach or render obvious that which is lacking in HEITKAMP et al., as discussed above, *e.g.*, with regard to Applicants' independent claims 1, 8 and 10.

Applicants submit that both HEITKAMP et al. (including abstract, column 1 lines 28-35, 40-67, column 2, lines 5-10, 16-24, column 3, lines 34-44, 63-67, column 4, 1-4, 24-32, column 5, 10-15, 48-57, which were cited in the Official Action) and JEFFRIES (including abstract, column 2 lines 16-25, 39-49, which were cited in the Official Action), or a combination thereof, fail to even disclose a home appliance, much less, *e.g.*, notifying at least one of a plurality of home appliances connected to a home network that the master device comprising the unique address or the assigned specific address has been appropriately connected to the network, as recited in, *e.g.*, independent claim 8 or claim 10. Applicants submit that both HEITKAMP et al. and JEFFRIES, or a combination thereof, fail to provide any provisions for working with a home appliance or with a network system comprising a plurality of home appliances. Furthermore, Applicants submit that both HEITKAMP et al. and JEFFRIES, or a combination thereof, do not disclose connecting a new

home appliance or determining whether the new home appliance is a master device, as recited in independent claim 10.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that both HEITKAMP et al. and JEFFRIES, or a combination thereof, do not disclose each and every element of Applicants' independent claims 1, 8 and 10, and thus, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on HEITKAMP et al. and JEFFRIES is respectfully requested. Further, claims 2-7, 9 and 11 depend from claims 1, 8 and 10 and are patentably distinguishable for at least the reasons provided above with respect to claims 1, 8 and 10, as well as for additional reasons related to their own recitations.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on HEITKAMP et al. and JEFFRIES, and an indication of the allowability of all pending claims in the next Official communication.

Applicants note that the status of the present application is after final rejection and that Applicants are not ordinarily permitted, as a matter of right, to amend an application once a final rejection has been issued. However, Applicants respectfully submit that, by the present response, they have not amended the claims in such a fashion as to give rise to any new issues requiring further consideration or search. Applicants have merely amended claim 1 so as to more clearly emphasize a feature previously recited in, e.g., dependent claims 2, 3 and 5. Amendment to claim 7 is purely for language clarification. Accordingly, Applicants' amendment is in full compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter and consider the herein-contained amendment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the rejections under 35 USC § 103 in the Official Action dated October 19, 2007, should be withdrawn. The present Amendment is in proper form, and none of the cited documents teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. In addition, the applied documents of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant features of the present invention have been pointed out. Accordingly, Applicants request timely allowance of the present application.

Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any further questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Sang Kyun LEE et al.

William Pieprz
Reg. No. 33,630

Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

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GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191